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ABSTRACT

Beginning in fall 1982 the Aurora West Public Schools (Illinois) conducted a multi-year study to identify the nature of their instructional programs and to establish a set of position statements that would serve as guides for program review and change. A significant element of the process was the involvement of the entire staff in development of the position statements and extensive opportunities for public reaction to the position statements. The presentation outlines the steps followed, the criteria used, the issues addressed, and the progress to date. The use of the various national reports and their influence on the status of education beginning in 1983 are identified. Attached to this overview of the instructional audit are a chronological outline of the audit; a sample program report and a sample chart of program goals, both from the first year of the study; a booklet of staff position statements, a sample form for public response to these statements, and a newsletter reporting the progress of the audit after 2 years; and a 3-year progress report issued March 1985. (Author/MCG)

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ABSTRACT

AN INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

An Interactive Process for Responding to National Studies by Assessing Program Status and Setting Direction and Priorities for the Future.

Presented at
the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Annual Convention, Chicago, Illinois, March 23, 1985 by a
team from Aurora West Public Schools, Aurora, Illinois

Beginning in the fall of 1982 the Aurora West Public Schools began a mutli-year process to identify the nature of their instructional programs and to establish a set of position statements which would serve as guides for program review and change. A significant element of the process was the involvement of the entire staff in the development of the position statements and extensive opportunity for public reaction to the position statements. The presentation outlines the steps followed, the criteria used, the issues addressed and the progress to date. The influence of and use of the various national reports on the status of education beginning in 1983 are identified.

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Beginning in August, 1982 the Aurora West Public Schools began a multi-year study of their instructional program and practices. The intent of this study was to determine what the programs and practices are, what they should be and to work toward modifying "what is" to more nearly conform to "what ought to be". This program has become known as THE INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT.

Background

For more than two decades the Board of Education and administration have been very much concerned with such thing as bonds, budgets and boundaries. The early years were those of continuing increases in enrollment with the attendant concerns for sufficient classroom space and staff to serve the students. As new facilities were constructed, programs found in existing schools were placed in the new schools. Beginning about 1972, the year of the largest total enrollment, fiscal concerns began to emerge. As the enrollment has continued to decline and fiscal concerns have increase, the Board of Education determined in 1982 that a critical examination of the school district's programs was necessary to provide a base for future decisions. To initiate this examination, the Board of Education established as one of its goals for the 1982-3 school year:

Instructional Audit (multi-year target)

Purpose : To provide for the Board a formal verification of all District 129 programs.

Thus began a comprehensive review of the educational programs of the district. The review began approximately nine months prior to the publication of the first of the "national reports" on the status of education in the United States.

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1982-3 - DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Leadership for the study was the Instructional Audit Steering Committee composed of one board of education member, three building administrators, and three members of the Instruction Department with the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction serving as chairperson.

Although an extensive search of the literature was made, there seemed to be no model which the committee could use to develop the descriptions without generating such a mass of data that it would be unmanagable. After having considered such things as course descriptions, course outlines, listings of course objectives and curriculum mapping, the committee determined that a narrative description should be developed for each area. The program was divided into three basic areas: subject matter disciplines (e.g. reading, mathematics, industrial arts); supports services (e.g. libraries, counselling services, special education); and extra curricular activities (e.g. sports, drama, clubs).

Audit reports were to be secured for each discipline, support service or extra curricular activity for each level: elementary, middle school, high school. The elements of the report used for the subject matter disciplines and support services were:

A. Program Content
   1. Indicate major subject matter topics and content emphasized.
   2. Indicate major skills emphasized, including progression.

B. Organization for Instruction
   1. Indicate major instructional modes used.
   2. Indicate major instructional materials and equipment used.
   3. Indicate how students are organized or grouped for instruction.
   4. Indicate the proportion of teachers who teach the same program and the proportion who teach only a part.

C. Pupils Served
   1. Indicate the proportion of students who receive instruction in this subject area.

D. Historical Background
   1. Describe how the subject got into the curriculum.
   2. Explain why we in West Aurora teach the subject the way we do.
   3. At the secondary level, indicate briefly why individual courses are included and how long they have been included.
   4. Indicate approximate school years in which significant changes have been made in this program.

E. Major Purposes
   1. From the list of 12 major objectives given, select the 1-3 to which the subject most relates. (The objectives list was from John Goodlad's "What Schools Are For", published by Phi Delta Kappa.)
   2. Under the major objectives given, select the sub-objectives which apply.

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F. Concerns
1. Indicate concerns which seriously affect the quality of instruction in this area.

The outline for extra curricular activities was similar to the above.

Whenever possible, reports were written by department chairpersons. In those cases where such did not exist, they were written by either administrators or classroom teachers, but reviewed by classroom teachers for accuracy.

A "cost per student per program" was initially proposed. Although some work was done on cost, that portion was dropped before it was completed.

Copies of the descriptions were placed in each school and the public library as well as being presented to each board member. Departments received copies of the appropriate disciplines K-12.

1983-4 - DETERMINING WHAT OUGHT TO BE

The Board of Education continued its direction for the Instructional Audit by establishing as one of the 1983-4 goals:

Instructional Audit - Development of Program Direction

Purpose : To provide for the Board of Education a position statement of what the instructional program of the District should be.

The composition of the Steering Committee was changed to reduce the number of Instruction Department members and to add three teachers, including the president of the local teachers' association. The addition of teachers was in recognition of the long standing cooperative spirit which has existed between teachers, administrators and the board of education and the realization that teachers definitely will be affected by the results of the study.

Having in hand the descriptions of all programs the next task was to find a way to determine what programs should be. Initially three sources of input were determined: the public, which is served by the schools; the staff, which is trained to develop and deliver an educational program; and authorities in the field of curriculum, who have devoted much time and thought to what is needed.

The emergence of a number of national reports, beginning with "A Nation at Risk", resulted in a change. The reports took the place of the authorities. After careful consideration, the Steering Committee determined that the staff should develop position statements for public consideration and reaction. It determined that public

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reaction should be in a manner which would permit interaction and foster understanding of the implications of various positions.

The Steering Committee elected to develop position statements only in areas which could be directly addressed locally. The Committee selected the following eight:

1. Common Core Curriculum
2. Choices (elective vs. required courses)
3. Dealing with Individual Differences
4. Academic and Behavioral Expectations
5. Essentials of Learning
6. Extra Curricular Programs
7. Student-Parent-School Responsibilities
8. Instructional Time

Finally, it set up a structure and process to include all staff members in the development of position statements. Such involvement was a critical factor in the entire design because it provided an opportunity for staff members to develop increased appreciation for teachers at other levels. A result was an improved appreciation, a sense of community and the setting of the stage for subsequent activities under the audit. It also greatly increased the staff's recognition for improved articulation between schools and departments and between the elementary, middle and high schools.

Four groups of fifteen teachers each were selected to identify possible statements to be included in each of the eight areas. From mid-January to the end of February the entire staff was involved in the development of the staff position statement. Each school staff developed a consensus statement for each area. Each school selected representatives to meet with one of four groups of fifteen teachers whose task was to work toward a broader consensus statement for each issue. Concurrently, the administrative staff was developing their consensus statement. Finally, a committee of twenty representing each of the four groups of fifteen plus the administrators developed a staff position statement for each area. (A copy is attached.)

The position statements, with a brief statement of national concern and district practices, were presented to the board of education. From March - May the Board of Education conducted 17 public hearings. In an attempt to insure that all segments of the public had an opportunty to be heard, the board mailed 1500 invitations to parents chosen at random, issued invitations through the press and school newsletters and held four hearings with specifically targeted persons (business and professional persons, AAUW, LWV, Urban League, retired persons; parents residing in low income housing; Hispanic parents). Copies of the staff position papers were made available to anyone wishing a copy prior to the hearings.

Board members conducted the hearings. They emphasized that they wanted to hear from the public and structured the hearings to do so in small groups. Staff members were available as resource people.

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Minutes of each session were taken and written reaction sheets were also uses.

During the months of June - August the Board of Education reviewed what they had heard at the hearings. Following a few changes, the Board adopted the position statements as indicators of their intended direction for the future.

1984-5 - BLENDING WHAT IS WITH WHAT OUGHT

Recognizing the general intent of the Board of Education for the direction for the third year of the audit, the total administrative staff at a two day retreat in June developed recommended actions for continuing the audit. These were consistent with the Board's 1984-5 goal:

Instructional Audit - Phase III

Purpose : To reconcile the current program status with desired directions.

Joint staff-citizen committees have been established to study each of the topics listed below. Following each topic is a brief statement of the committees 1984-5 tasks, the composition of the committee and a progress report as of March 23, 1985.

A. COMMON CORE:

Major Tasks

- Define a core of common learnings which describe the outcomes of 13 years of schooling,
- Recommend courses to be included,
- Develop an implementation plan including graduation requirements.

Membership

9 staff memebers K-12
3 community members

Progress Report

The committee has met about ten times. They are focusing on the learnings expected of all graduates rather than graduation requirements. One of the unresolved issues is mastery of learnings vs. experiences to promote the learnings. The work to date may be outlined as in the following diagram.

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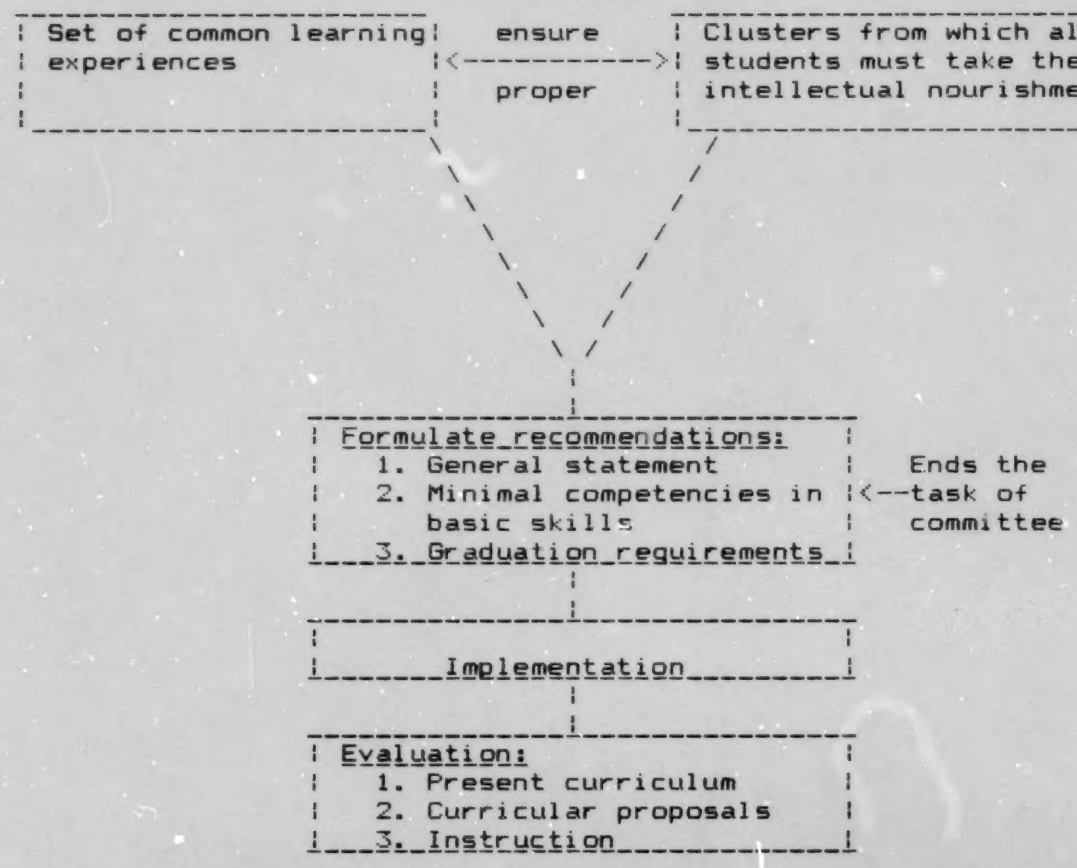

Common learnings could be found in a number of courses, rather than a single one. Students would be expected to take courses from each of the clusters developed.

In addition, a staff committee is working on levels of courses required for graduation.

B. STANDARDS FOR PASSING AND RETENTION

Major Tasks

- Develop a position statement which includes the issue of relative or absolute standards,
- Develop basic standards for each level to pass to the next grade or level: kindergarten, primary, intermediate, middle school, high school,
- Develop a procedure for consideration by others.

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Membership

18 staff members K-12
8 parents

Progress Report

A working draft of a position statement has been developed and the committee should complete work on it soon. The draft included standards, reasons, monitoring and processes common to all levels (elementary, middle school and high school) plus the same four elements unique to each level. The standards are to be met to move from one level to the next, but not necessarily one grade level to the next. It will be necessary to expand the committee, especially when they move into grading standards (the second part of their task).

C. STUDENT, PARENT AND SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major Tasks

- Develop a statement of responsibilities for each group,
- Develop an implementation plan.

Membership

10 staff members K-12
5 parents

Progress Report

A draft statement has been developed which briefly outlines the responsibilities of each group in a clear and concise list format. The committee is in process of developing a listing of both school and community resources. The intent is to prepare the list in a problems format of "Who to contact if..." The committee is also working on a series of recommended highlights from the "Rights and Responsibilities Handbook" which could be used throughout the year in individual school newsletters. Although the committee has been charged with suggesting staff inservice to carry out the intent of the statements, the committee believes the Staff Development Committee should be responsible for this.

D. ARTICULATION

Major Tasks

- Develop a definition of articulation,
- Establish critical articulation points,
- Establish subject area priorities,
- Establish a time line for each subject area,

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- Define procedures and responsibilities for carrying out articulation.

Membership

Curriculum Advisory Council II (14 staff members from all levels)

Progress Report

A working definition has been developed. Critical articulation points have been identified as K-1, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9. Reading, language and math have been identified as the top priority areas. All other subjects are priority two. The committee is evaluating the current status of articulation prior to recommending procedures and responsibilities.

E. HOMEWORK

Major Tasks

- Develop a philosophy statement,
- Develop guidelines for use with different ages and levels,
- Develop representative samples of appropriate homework for each level: primary, intermediate, middle school, high school,
- Recommend an implementation plan.

Membership

Professional Council (5 teacher association members, 5 administrators)

Progress Report

The committee got a late start. It has met once and has identified the key questions and issues. The next meeting will begin work on the philosophy and purposes for homework. The committee will also be determining the appropriate point to involve parents.

F. PREPARATION FOR THE WORK FORCE

Major Tasks

- Develop a position statement,
- Develop a statement of general competencies and attitudes needed for entering the world of work,
- Recommend courses or course changes needed to carry out the position and meet the competencies and attitudes recommended,
- Plan for inter-district cooperation.

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AN INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

Membership

In process of determination, but will include both Aurora West School District and Aurora East School District staff and community representatives.

Progress Report

The composition and time table for this task has been changed as a result of the Illinois State Plan for Education for Employment adopted in December, 1984. Now it is not just the two Aurora districts which are involved but a region also including Geneva, Batavia, Kaneland, Waubonsee Community College and possibly Oswego and Yorkville. It is expected that a planning grant will be submitted to the state in July. The time table is:

Regionalize by	July 1, 1985
Write the plan by	July 1, 1986
Develop curriculum plan by	July 1, 1987
Fully implement by	July 1, 1988

G. ALTERNATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR

Major Tasks

- Identify the nature and extent of behavior problems,
- Identify current alternatives for dealing with misbehavior and their effectiveness,
- Identify additional alternatives.

Membership

The committee has not been formed but will include teachers, principals, special education staff, deans or counsellors, and parents.

Progress Report

None.

Although the process is not completed, several conclusions may be made:

1. Concerns about public education have been directly addressed.

2. Staff interaction has significantly increased appreciation for each other and for the contributions being made by each of the levels of the district. This has resulted in a greater sense of unity within the district.

3. Community interest in, concern for, understanding of and

appreciation for the schools has been enhanced.

4. The staff position statements, adopted by the Board of Education, have established a renewed sense of direction for the school district as it looks to the future.

For additional information contact

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INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

A Report at ASCD March 23, 1985

Presented by a team from West Aurora Public Schools
Aurora, IL

INTRODUCTION - Tom Madden, Principal, West High School

Objectives:

1. To help you understand one district's approach to self-assessment;
2. To apprise you of the hurdles, trials, insights and joys that enter into such an act;
3. To help you appreciate the need for teamwork and commitment;
4. To help you appreciate the critical role that a structured process plays in this type of activity.

BACKGROUND - Deann Alleman, President, Board of Education

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS - Miles Beach, Teacher and President, Teachers' Association

THE CONCEPT - Deann Alleman

YEAR ONE - WHAT IS - Donald Nylin, Asst. Supt. for Instruction

September	Develop status reports
	Identify three categories: subjects taught, support services, extra curricular activities
October	What to collect
December	Curriculum - real or paper
January	Questions to answer (listed in sample report)
	Collection issues
February - May	Report writing
May - August	Prepare reports

YEAR TWO - WHAT OUGHT - Donald Nylin

September	Review reports
	Decide to secure reaction from staff and public
October	Statements for reaction
November	Factors we might control

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Select issues (report will contain)

Decide to develop position statement

December — Consider response options

January — Develop response options

February — Develop position statements (to be distributed)

Plan public meetings

YEAR TWO - PUBLIC MEETINGS - Deann Alleman

March - May — Board conducts hearings

June - July — Board reviews hearing results

Board adopts revised statements

Plan next steps

YEAR THREE - BLENDING WHAT IS AND WHAT OUGHT - Tom Madden

Identify working groups

Sample of one committee's work

(Progress reports including composition of committees and their major tasks will be distributed at the end of the meeting.)

CONCLUSION - Miles Beach

For further information, please contact

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Materials Packet

INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT
West Aurora (Illinois) Public Schools

ASCD
Chicago, March 23, 1985

The items in this packet are:

Staff Position Statements - Year Two (booklet)

Sample Report, Reading - Year One

Sample Chart of Program Goals - Year One

Sample Public Hearings Response Form - Year Two

School Zone - Report to public after Year Two

Progress Report, March 13, 1985 - Contains listing of committee major tasks and committee composition

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READING - K-8

PROGRAM CONTENT

1. Major Subject Matter Content

The reading program K-8 has three major divisions: K,pre-reading skills; 1-2, development of basic skills of learning to read; 4-8, use of basic skills to read to learn. Reading for enjoyment and exposure to literature is included at all levels.

2. Major Skills Emphasized.

At the readiness level emphasis is placed on oral language, developing an awareness that words in written form have a relationship to spoken language, learning the names of letters, sound-symbol relationships, and selected words.

At the primary level, a major emphasis is placed on decoding words - finding out what the word is. This is done primarily by phonics, structural analysis and context clues. Meaning is an integral part of decoding. The structure of words is studied to assist in both decoding and for developing meaning. Considerable emphasis is also placed on comprehension - gaining meaning from groups of words, particularly sentences, short paragraphs and stories. Comprehension includes such things as finding details, identifying main ideas, recognizing cause and effect, making inferences, using illustrations, and following directions. In addition to decoding and comprehension, study skills including the use of parts of a book, using charts, tables, maps and illustrations, dictionary use and summarizing are developed. Literature study is begun in the primary grades to develop appreciation and an awareness of a variety of forms of writing and reading for various purposes.

At the intermediate and middle school levels, decoding receives less emphasis but is continued with study of word parts (roots, prefixes and suffixes), compound words and multiple meanings. Context clues are more important than phonics since more emphasis is placed on meaning. Comprehension skills receive major emphasis because students are learning to read in other subjects. Major attention is given to finding details, identifying main ideas and similar literal meaning. Inferences, drawing conclusions, distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying cause and effect relationships, comparing and contrasting and making generalizations are very important skills studied.

Skill development begun in primary grades is expanded. Use of additional reference sources is taught as are basic library skills such as use of the card catalog and basic reference sources.

The basic text format uses many selections drawn from texts used in various subject areas and reference-type materials.

Literature continues to be used for much the same reasons as in primary grades. Additional forms are introduced, selections are longer and more complex and, in some cases, entire books are read.

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Many of the skills taught in reading are reinforced in the language program. Ideally, skills in reading in content areas are used in other subjects. The transfer varies considerably from teacher to teacher but in general is used. The greatest need for this appears to be at the secondary school level.

Throughout the elementary and middle schools pupils are encouraged to read for information and pleasure. Elementary learning centers are extensively used for skill reinforcement, reference materials and materials for reading for information and pleasure. Middle school libraries are used similarly except that they do little reinforcement.

ORGANIZATION FOR INSTRUCTION

1. Major Instructional Modes.

Reading instruction involves direct instruction in skills with explanation, practice and review of skills. Pupils are assigned readings followed by discussion, checking of skills and understanding through both oral discussion and written worksheets. Pupils are encouraged to read independently.

2. Major Instructional Materials and Equipment

Basic textbooks, other materials accompanying the basic text, workbooks, various worksheets are the major materials. Overheads and tape players are occasionally used. Supplementary materials from learning centers and the district material center include books, study booklets, tapes and filmstrips. Teacher-made materials and films from the county are also used.

3. Organization for Instruction

At the elementary and middle school levels pupils are grouped for instruction based upon demonstrated achievement. Achievement is continually monitored based on daily performance and periodic testing using tests developed by the text publishers. At the primary level 3 groups are common within a classroom. Most intermediate grades have 2-3 groups. At the middle school pupils are assigned to groups by demonstrated achievement irrespective of homeroom. Typically pupils are not cross-graded.

4. Teachers of the Program

At the elementary level all classroom teachers use the same program. Some cross-classroom grouping within a given grade is done, especially at the intermediate level.

At the middle school each teacher, regardless of subject, teaches reading. All use the same basic program.

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PUPILS SERVED

1. Proportion of Pupils Receiving Instruction

100% in grades K-8. In addition to basic reading instruction in the classroom and additional use of libraries and learning centers selected pupils receive additional assistance through special education services. In qualifying schools, selected pupils grades 2-5 receive assistance from the Chapter I, ECIA reading specialists.

In grades 1 and 2 reading occupies approximately 40% of the day; at grade 3 it is approximately 30%; at the intermediate level this becomes about 20% with additional reinforcement in the other subjects; at middle school it is equivalent to half a regular period of the students six and a half periods of classes. The middle school communications course at both grades includes literature and novel study in addition to the reading class.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Reasons for Including in the Curriculum

Learning to read has been a basic function of schools in America since their inception.

2. Local Rationale for Curriculum Content

A basal reading program has been used for years because such programs are designed to insure a continuous and articulated program of skill development. Although there are some differences between available programs, we have selected a balanced approach which emphasizes various decoding methods, a balance between literataure and reading for information, and an emphasis on comprehension.

3. Local Rationale for Individual Courses (secondary only)

Not applicable.

4. Recent Significant Changes

At the intermediate level a major change was made in 1973 to place more emphasis upon reading in the content areas. In 1974 a literataure supplement was added to the entire elementary program. This literature emphasis was further enhanced by the addition of a more prescriptive literature program in 1980.

Developmental reading as a separate subject was introduced at the middle school level in the fall of 1975. Prior to 1970 the reading instruction was part of the communication program which had a double period. The emphasis, however, was not skill-development oriented but was built around the study of literature.

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MAJOR PURPOSES

(Limited to 3 major goals for each subject, listed in priority order. Numbers refer to the master list of 12 major goals and sub-points, which are found in Appendix A.)

1. Mastery of basic skills or fundamental processes

   1.1 Develop the ability to acquire ideas through reading and listening
   1.4 Develop the ability to utilize available sources of information

3. Intellectual development

   3.2 Develop the ability to use and evaluate knowledge; i.e., critical and independent thinking that enables one to make judgments and decisions in a wide variety of life roles (e.g., citizen, consumer, worker, etc.)
   3.3 Accumulate a general fund of knowledge, including information and concepts in mathematics, literature, natural science and social science
   3.4 Develop the ability to make use of knowledge sources, utilizing technology to gain access to needed information

8. Creativity and aesthetic perception

   8.2 Develop the ability to be sensitive to problems and tolerant of the new ideas
   8.5 Develop the ability to understand creative contributions of others and to evaluate them

CONCERNS

1. The skills taught in the basal program are not automatically transferred to the content subjects by students. Since content determines the reading process required, instruction in reading textbooks needs to be given in the content areas.

2. Although overall reading scores indicate a successful reading program K-8, there are children who are failing to learn how to read.

3. Staff development programs in the improvement of reading instruction for elementary and secondary teachers need to be planned in a more comprehensive way.

4. There is a need to determine alternative methods for preparing children of differing abilities, backgrounds, and development.

5. Are pupils instructed at a pace appropriate to their needs and the comprehensiveness of the program.

6. Is there sufficient monitoring to insure appropriate pacing and sufficient and appropriate use of the program.

NOTE: Concerns No. 4, 5, and 6 apply in many subject areas. It will only be included here rather than being repeated.

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SAMPLE OF YEAR I CHART SHOWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBJECTS AND GOODLAD'S GOALS

ELEMENTARY	Kdg.	Rdg.	L.A.	Sp.	Pen	Mat	Sci	Hea	S.S.	Art	Voc Mus	Ins Mus	P.E.		
1. MASTER BASIC SKILLS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1								
.1 reading & listening		x	x												
.2 writng & speaking	x		x	x	x										
.3 math concepts	x					x									
.4 information sources		x	x				x								
.5 arithmetic operations						x									
2. CAREER & VOCATIONAL ED.					2	3						1			
.1 select occupation															
.2 salable skills															
.3 productive attitudes					x	x						x			
.4 attitude toward work															
3. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOP.	2	2	3	2	3	2	1								
.1 think rationally				x		x	x								
.2 use/evaluate knowledge		x					x								
.3 fund of knowledge	x	x		x	x	x	x								
.4 use knowledge sources		x	x			x									
.5 intellectual curiosity	x		x			x	x								

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RESPONSE FORM

ISSUE 3. - CHOICES

1. My overall reaction to the position statement about "Choices" is: (circle one)

   a. agree

   b. undecided

   c. disagree

2. Parts I particularly agree with are:

3. Parts I particularly disagree with are:

4. Other comments or suggested changes:

RESPONSE FORM

ISSUE 4 - EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

1. My overall reaction to the position statement about "Extra-Curricular Activities" is: (circle one)

   a. agree

   b. undecided

   c. disagree

2. Parts I particularly agree with are:

3. Parts I particularly disagree with are:

4. Other comments or suggested changes.

A report to the District 129 community

SCHOOL ZONE

Vol. II 1984-85

1. DO YOU KNOW
How many children are enrolled in the West Aurora Public Schools?
a. 8,534 b. 8,476 c. 8,601

2. DO YOU KNOW
How many West High students have been named National Merit Scholars since the inception of the program in 1955?
a. 45 b. 92 c. 79

3. DO YOU KNOW
How much it cost to educate one student in the West Aurora Public Schools during school year 1982-83?
a. $2,656. b. $2,915 c. $2,798.

4. DO YOU KNOW
How many District 129 students will receive computer education during the 1984-85 school year?
a. 4,063 b. 2,815 c. 3,590

5. DO YOU KNOW
What percentage of West High's 1984 graduating class (517 members) planned to attend a four-year college, two-year college, or a vocational school?
a. 47% b. 62% c. 55%

Public Education:
More Than A Trivial Pursuit

By Mary Ann Gord, Greenman Elementary School Teacher

Games of trivia for players of all ages are sweeping across the country. These games, which require the recall of facts and figures, are sharing the news with a much older game—the game of educational pursuit.

Is the obtaining of an education a game of trivial pursuit? Is it a game of recalling facts and figures and receiving recognition for that accomplishment? We have all taken tests which asked us to recall everything from what 2 + 2 equal to who was the sixteenth president of the United States. But, how valuable have facts **alone** been to you in your life and career? Think for a moment on where you would be today if you had learned only facts and had never learned how to apply and expand creatively upon those facts. For instance, isn't it easier to recognize a car than it is to design one?

A public education is so much more than a pursuit of answers to questions. The game of public educational pursuit is longlasting: It lasts for thirteen years and prepares the players for two, three, or four times as many years to come. The game prepares the participants to be successful as individuals, to be contributing members of the community.

If the players in this game are our children—the citizens and leaders of tomorrow—who coaches then this game of educational pursuit? The coaches are the teachers, parents, administrators, and support staff of our school district who act as the guides for our players, the ones who encourage and assist and help set goals and purposes for the future. Who are the winners? That's an easy question! All of us are winners! When our children win the game, so do we. It is their assimilation and application of facts and figures that will build our homes and businesses; run our city, state, and country; and keep us safe and healthy. We are truly all winners, because here, in District 129, public education is more than a trival pursuit.

This issue of **School Zone** will focus on how the game of educational pursuit is developed, i.e., curriculum development and the Instructional Audit, and on some of the "coaches" of the game. Throughout the newsletter are boxed trivia questions about District 129. To determine your score, check page eight for the answers.

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Education...*a twelve month job*

By Rick Johnson, Reading Consultant

Children may have the summer off, but the period of June, July, and August is the time of year when some district teachers are able to get together for the purpose of designing and improving curriculum. This issue of **School Zone** reports on some of the work accomplished this past summer by district teachers who were involved in curriculum development in three areas—Elementary Language Arts, Hope Wall Life Skills Reading Program, and West High's Parenting Course.

Karen Garbe and Jeff Harrison, Smith School sixth graders, practice the craft of writing which earned them Special Awards of Excellence in the district's American Education Week Writers' and Artists' Contest.

The Elementary Language Curriculum Committee had two major goals in their summer work. First, they hoped to provide the teachers and, consequently, the students, with a logical concrete process to follow which would provide the basis for writing in grades 1-6. The program divides writing into several categories: prewriting activities that allow and encourage the student to think and rehearse specific ideas on a topic; modeling of samples of each style of writing to encourage and allow the writer to see what a fine finished product resembles; criteria for writing that provide the student, the teacher, and the parent with specific characteristics of each writing assignment; evaluation techniques for teaching students how to evaluate their own writing; and a parent letter that explains the unit, the criteria, and activities to the parent.

The second goal centers on teaching more language skills through the Racine Daily Oral Usage Program, which is already a valued part of the language curriculum in the district. The hope of the committee is that the basics of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics will be taught and reviewed through the Racine Program and that the rest of the language arts block of time will be used for teaching students to write.

Teachers who were members of the Elementary Language Curriculum Committee were Cathie Beach, Lynda Stone, Nancy Dynkowski, Collette Lee, and Joann Morr from Smith School; Lenore Nier and Jan Essex from Hall School; Nell Evans and Marcella Taylor from Lincoln School; Barb Kern, Carla Meister, and Marilyn Regulus from Greenman School; and Candy Johnson from McCleery School.

The Life Skills Reading Program is a functional reading approach for handicapped readers developed by the Hope Wall staff. The LSR program makes use of real-life materials for reading instruction. These include, but are not limited solely to, reading cards, labels, applications, manuals, pamphlets, calendars, schedules, newspapers, and signs. Other reading materials are being added as units of instruction are developed.

Parental involvement is encouraged actively in the LSR. Parents are made aware of the objectives for the student as each unit of instruction begins, and at-home teaching ideas to support the school instruction are provided. When the unit is completed, the teacher asks for homework feedback from the parents. In this way, teaching and learning go beyond the school day.

Hope Wall staff members who developed the Life Skills Reading Program were David Gaub, Cheryl Heidt, Teresa Jefford, David Klenke, Pam Rice, Marilyn Ruby, and Steve Wilson.

Curriculum revision for the high school Parenting class consisted of further development of the course into basic and practical skills needed for parenting.

Students in the elective class, taught by Audrey Fechner, have an opportunity to use decision-making and problem-solving skills by participating in a variety of activities as well as in class discussions and in analysis of case studies.

Parents in the community are invited by the instructor to visit the class and share experiences and answer questions regarding the varied role of parenthood. Speakers from community agencies also share expertise on topics of concern to parents.

Students have the opportunity to observe children of various ages, see demonstrations of how to care for children, and view films on behavior of children.

In addition, topics such as child abuse, discipline, nutrition, health and safety, family problems and stress, living with handicapped children, the single parent family, and values of play are included in the semester class for juniors and seniors.

Superintendent's Message

Someone once observed that a good education is very expensive, but a poor one is infinitely more costly. This axiom is a measure of America's historic and bittersweet experience with its public school system. The national decision to educate all of our children required a substantial financial investment. The payoff, however, would be a motivated, literate average man, able to make wise choices, one whose contributions over a lifetime would far exceed the initial investment.

Our recent national economic difficulties have resulted in the need to cut back in several areas, including education. With recovery, however, comes the challenge of choosing priorities for reinvestment. I am heartened that education is high on the list for many individuals. An exciting and unique example of public education's being given a high priority is emerging right here in Illinois' Fox River Valley.

The Corridor Partnership for Excellence in Education is a coalition of interests in this region which realizes that education is important to the future of this area. The coalition was formed in order to assure an exceptional educational environment in the Fox Valley. The Partners include the business and industrial community, national laboratories, local governments, colleges, universities, and local school systems.

The idea had its beginning when Fermilab and Argonne became members of the Valley Industrial Association. The VIA is a longtime area industrial organization with membership reaching into Kane, Kendall, DuPage, and DeKalb counties. When the directors of the laboratories shared the national concern for math and science education, the VIA pursued a cooperative response by bringing together a number of interests willing to support good schools. The coalition that has evolved holds great promise for all of us.

The Partnership first enlisted the support of Northern Illinois University in studying area schools to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The results showed, happily, that schools in the region are far superior to those in the national sample. Indeed, math and science seemed to be a special strength of the region! We know that West High School has been blessed with outstanding math and science departments—our SAT and ACT scores prove it. Now, the Partners are seeking to utilize this strength.

The potential benefits from cooperation are limitless. For students, the Partnership can arrange mentorships from research and industry; provide exposure to the research-oriented technology of the I-5 Corridor; and assume the expansion of career awareness and opportunities.

For teachers, the Partnership can provide an opportunity to work with researchers and scientists in the region. Faculty exchanges are planned. The "classroom" can now be extended to include technological-intensive facilities along the Corridor. Opportunities for increased expertise via seminars and college programs will be enhanced.

The Partnership holds the potential of relieving some financially strapped school districts as well. Business and industry support can help fund programs, seminars, and equipment. School districts within the area are already holding discussions on faculty exchanges and on opening enrollment to students from other districts in "market thin" classes.

The activity of the Partnership which has gained the most attention is the proposal to establish an Academy of Science and Mathematics for exceptionally talented youngsters from the State of Illinois. Initially proposed by Leon Lederman, Director of Fermilab, the Academy has gained the support of the Governor; and Governor Thompson has suggested that it be opened in our area.

Citizens should be assured that District 129 intends to be an active member of the Partnership. We have had the opportunity for involvement from the beginning, and we recognize the promise made possible by our cooperation. If we can become the hub for the regional effort, so much the better!

Gary D. Jewel

Lincoln School has joined hands with Richards-Wilcox Mfg. Co. in "Project Neighbor." According to Paul Baudouin, R-W Project Chairman, pictured explaining the company's products to Lincoln fifth and sixth graders, "'Project Neighbor' is dedicated to a better understanding of our neighbors and friends."

Teaching . . . *A Family Affair*

By Barbara Paulson, Editor

Lincoln Elementary School teacher Ida May Fagan . . . "for nine months of every year, school and teaching are my life."

A "family" is "a group of people united by certain convictions," according to **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.** In that context, staff members of District 129 are a family—that is, eight hundred staff members united by their belief in quality education for each child.

A second definition in the same dictionary describes "family" as "the basic unit in society having as its nucleus two or more adults living together and cooperating in the care and rearing of their own or adopted children." Again District 129 staff members conform—many of them are family units professionally. In many cases parents and their adult children are teaching within the district.

The Fagans are one such teaching family. Ida May Fagan—teacher of twenty-two Lincoln Elementary School fifth graders, mother of two District 129 staff members, foster mother of nine children, and past-officer of Greenman and Franklin PTAs as well as the PTA Council—"loves working with children!"

From 1958 through 1969, prior to completing the remaining two years of her college coursework, Ida May Fagan was the secretary at Lincoln School. "I always wanted to teach. I had two years of college, and realized, as I grew older, it was now or not at all as far as completing my degree," she emphasized. In 1970, after two and one-half years of attending night classes and summer school at Northern Illinois University, all the while continuing to be Lincoln's secretary, she received her teaching degree.

Ida May was hired by the district to teach at Nicholson Elementary School. That year she attended new teacher orientation sessions with her son Mike, an instrumental music teacher, who was also a first-year staff member. After two years at Nicholson, Ida May returned to Lincoln - this time as a member of the teaching staff. Mike Fagan continues to teach instrumental music in District 129, and Ida May's daughter, Cathy Fagan Baines, is a kindergarten teacher at McCleery Elementary School. Ida May Fagan is also the mother-in-law of a district teacher, Lila Peterson Fagan, Mike's wife, who too is an instrumental music teacher.

Ida May Fagan believes that "the Westside schools have been good to us as a family. We would like to try to give back some of what we've received."

6. DO YOU KNOW
How many semester hours of credit were taken by the West High student body during the 1983-84 school year?
a. 27,788 b. 25,055 c. 23,431

7. DO YOU KNOW
What percentage of the 516 certified staff members in District 129 have a Master's Degree or more advanced degree?
a. 37% b. 46% c. 25%

Remember the ELF Box? It is still around and available for parents to purchase at their local elementary school. The ELF Box is a kit of cards with instructions for activities for parents to use with their preschool children. The activities, for children from birth to age five, are designed to encourage development of skills needed for success in school. The activities are simple, fun to do, and require only materials found around the home.

In Aurora the ELF Box has been distributed by the PTA units in elementary schools. This year renewed efforts will be made by PTA representatives and school staff to reach more parents to remind them of the importance of early preparation for school success.

Plans are being made to hold parent workshops, neighborhood coffees, and to establish Preschool PTAs.

The sale of the ELF Box will be handled by the elementary school offices, rather than the PTA representative. The cost of the kits remains at $4.00. Some schools provide for the checkout of kits to parents. For further information, contact your neighborhood elementary school or call the West Aurora Public Schools Administration Office, 844-4452.

Coming Home...*West High Grads*

By Sandra Bauer, Goodwin Elementary School Principal

Six hundred and eighty-four kindergarteners began school this year in District 129. The thought of these tiny learners continuing to attend school for the next twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years seems incomprehensible. Yet in District 129, there are many former students who have returned—following graduation from West High and the earning of a college degree—to become staff members and continue to attend school, year after year, as teachers.

Approximately twenty-five current teachers are West High graduates. The memories of some of these returning graduates were tapped to discover what influenced them to enter the profession of education and to discuss who on the current teaching staff was responsible for creating their desire to teach.

Former West High graduate Randy Melvin, heading his West High health class, has fulfilled his dream of being a teacher.

Randy Melvin, a new West High health teacher and coach, shared some of his recollections of the fine high school coaches and dedicated classroom teachers who helped to shape his future as an educator. Jack Hughes, George Dyche, Herschel Banberry, Gordon Kerkman, Bill Sweeney, Curtis Shaw, and John Bell were some of the coaches who used athletics to teach the valuable lessons of self-discipline, self-control, and the meaning of responsibility. "The discipline of sports pulled me through," says Randy.

Academic instructors also shaped Randy Melvin's dream of being a teacher. According to Randy, Patricia Novak, communications teacher at Washington, made reading enjoyable. Pat recalls Randy as a very shy young man. But, he was obviously impressed by her special way of teaching. He adds that his wife, Karen, a teacher at Todd School, deserves credit also.

Connie Healy, Goodwin's kindergarten teacher and a West High graduate, recalls the encouragement she received from a former West High School teacher, Larry Galloway, who convinced her to attend college—at least for one semester. She went, she stayed, and she returned to District 129. Her other memories include enjoying high school Latin class with Francis Evers and being intrigued by a former junior high school teacher presently principal at Schneider Dick Phillip's explanation of place value by questioning what would happen to the odometer on his car after the number 99,999 appeared.

Mike Fagan, District 129 band instructor and another West High graduate, recalled Dick Ebeling's impressive style as a high school science teacher. He recalls Mr. Ebeling as strict, having high expectations, and always willing to give extra help. That approach set a pattern that Mike adopted and now applies to his own personal teaching style.

Chris Crouch, district educational diagnostician, finished her high school career at West High. She remembers Francis Evers, Tish Evers, Janis Lapsa, John Bauer, Jennie Saunders-Brown, and Ellen Neupert as teachers who made a difference. Mrs. Neupert's enthusiasm and visible love for teaching impressed Chris and helped to confirm her early elementary school career plans of someday being a teacher.

Donna Oleson, Washington Middle School Chapter I teacher, also completed her high school years at West High. Her memories include Mike Adolph and his teaching expertise in the areas of World and Russian History. His encouragement to read widely and critically left a positive mark on Donna. She recalls thinking, "If only I could someday teach as he does."

Perhaps one of the 684 kindergarteners, the West High graduating class of 1997, will go on to college and return to District 129 as a teacher in the year 2001. That tiny learner just might be influenced to chose the teaching profession by a current District 129 master teacher.

A Report to the Community...
The Instructional Audit, Phase II

By Margaret Truax, Board of Education Member

The Instructional Audit, a three-year comprehensive review of all District 129 programs, was initiated by the Board of Education in the summer of 1982. During the first year of the Audit (1982-83), staff members prepared written descriptions of each subject area, extracurricular program, and support service. The following school year, 1983-84, a steering committee reviewed the major national reports, selected eight important issues to address, and prepared position statements about the issues.

Last spring, a series of seventeen community meetings focused on public reaction to the position statements. These reactions were then incorporated into revised statements, which were reviewed by the Board of Education and adopted on August 20, 1984. The following is a summary of the eight positions:

Issue 1. Essentials of Learning

A general education is needed for personal development, physical well-being, effective functioning as a citizen, and vocational preparation. A positive self-concept and an awareness of individual talents are essential to the total development of the student. Students need to understand why they are learning and how to use that learning in life both now and later.

Major emphasis should be given to developing skills in reading, communication (oral and written), and mathematics; developing the ability and willingness to do quality work; and developing effective interpersonal skills.

A balanced, general education should include the arts (literature, music, and art) as an integral part of the program—kindergarten through grade eight and optional thereafter.

Issues 2 and 3. Common Curriculum and Choices

To insure that each student has a sound and appropriate basic education, a common curriculum should emphasize basic knowledge and skills. All elementary and middle school subjects (courses) should be required of every student. When appropriate, subjects should be adjusted to the different capability levels of students. At the middle school level, the exploratory program shall be required. Some components of the exploratory program will be required, other components may be elective. No electives will be offered except as a part of the exploratory program.

At the high school level, the current components of the common curriculum should be reviewed and revisions recommended. The majority of the specifically required courses should be taken during the freshman and sophomore years with more options available during the junior and senior years.

Especially during the middle and high school years, courses and programs should be available for students of various abilities. Admission to such courses or programs should be based upon assessment of the student's aptitude and performance related to the course or program and recommendations of teachers familiar with the student. Provision should be made to increase parental involvement in course selection.

At the high school level, course planning for the remainder of the high school years should occur during the freshman year. The plan should be reviewed at least annually. Most electives should be part of a planned sequence of courses. Greater opportunities are needed to provide students and parents with guidance in course selection and planning related to the immediate years beyond high school.

8. DO YOU KNOW

How many elementary pupils and middle school students are participating presently in the reading ELP-Extended Learning Program?

a. 944 b. 872 c. 1020

Issue 4. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities should support the educational goals of the district. Each activity has unique objectives which should be stated clearly and reviewed periodically in light of the district's goals.

Available extracurricular activities at all levels should include not only athletic but also cultural, academic, and vocational areas. All students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.

Participation in any extracurricular activity should be limited to students who meet district eligibility requirements and, where applicable, requirements of the Illinois High School Association. High standards of conduct and sportsmanship should be expected of all students. Students who do not conduct themselves accordingly in class, school, and school activities should be subject to denial of participation in extracurricular activities.

Issue 5. Individual Differences

Grouping within a classroom or within a course is appropriate at all levels, in order that students may be assigned to the level at which they may meet success but still be challenged. Grouping should be done for an individual subject only and should be based upon clearly defined criteria related to that subject. Grouping procedures and practices should not be detrimental to either the school program or to students. Whenever students are grouped, they should also have opportunities to associate with students from other groups.

Students who are grouped should have their status and placement reviewed annually or at any other time at the request of the teacher, parents, or student. The basis for grouping should be clearly defined and communicated to students and parents along with a statement of the student's placement.

A Report to the Community...
The Instructional Audit, Phase II

It is recognized that some children's preschool years do not equip them for success in kindergarten. A range of alternatives should be identified to serve the needs of these children once they are enrolled in school. Although programs for earlier intervention might be desirable, these are outside the scope of the school district's responsibilities. The school district staff should cooperate with other community agencies or groups serving preschool children.

Special education programs and support services should be available to those students who, by virtue of specifically identified handicaps, are unable to benefit from regular educational programs. Resources for special education services or instruction services should be allocated based upon pupil needs.

Issue 6. Expectations

To improve the quality of students' education, the academic and behavior standards need to be higher in several areas.

a. Grades and Homework

District guidelines for grades should be more specific and should be communicated to students and parents.

A district homework policy which recommends the nature of meaningful homework for various levels and subjects should be developed and implemented.

b. Retention in a grade/Failure of a course

Standards for passing each grade or subject should be developed, communicated to students and parents, and applied.

Grading and retention policies should be designed and used to help prepare students for the expectations of the next level of schooling (primary, intermediate, middle school, high school).

c. Student Behavior and Consequences of Misbehavior

Published standards for pupil behavior are reasonable and will be enforced. Enforcement of those standards requires the cooperation of the principal, teachers, students, and parents. In support of the district standards, each school should develop its own written discipline plan. Although the specific plan may vary from school to school, the standards will be common to all schools.

A range of alternative consequences needs to be found for chronically misbehaving students. Considerations should include, but not be limited to, assignment to special classes outside the school day or exclusion from school.

Issue 7. Student-Parent Responsibility

The parents' responsibility for their child's education should include an active role in preparing the child for learning, monitoring the child's progress, encouraging and motivating achievement and good behavior, and emphasizing the importance of school. The attitude that schooling is a high priority should be fostered by both the schools and parents and should be accepted by students. Regular attendance is one important indicator of this priority.

Parent-teacher conferences are an effective means of communication and nurturing mutual support of a student. Conferences should be encouraged at all levels. Time should be made available for these conferences.

Issue 8. Instructional Time

Efforts should be made to use class time more efficiently, and more appropriate home study should be assigned.

Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors should be required and seniors encouraged to attend the full day (7 hours).

Consideration should be given to extending student instructional time to allow more instruction and more opportunities for choices.

Phase III of the Instructional Audit is underway. The topics to be studied have been identified, the committee members have been selected, target dates for completion of committee work have been designated, and the end product for each committee has been stated. The end products will be recommendations for action to bring priorities, policies, and practices into conformity with the position statements. Target dates for completion of committee work vary from 15 January 1985 to 15 August 1986.

Statue of Liberty/Freedom Bookmark Contest winners at Goodwin are: (front row, l-r) Courtney Meyer, Kelly Davis, Edward Crommes, Jason Leigh; (second row) Jessica Housh, Erin MacMillan, Jessie Kalal, Mike Shanley; (back row) Heather Kish, Amy Brown, Rhonda Willett.

Q: ***Which is the largest volunteer organization in the world devoted solely to the welfare of children?***

A: ***The PTA-Parent Teacher Association!***

By Lauralyn Theodore, Parent

The District 129 Parent Teacher Organization consists of twelve local units and a PTA Council. Parents, teachers, and friends of education are urged to join their local units. Annual dues are $1.50 per person. Of the $1.50 paid, fifty-five cents go to the state PTA, fifty cents to the national PTA, and forty-five cents stay with the local unit. Local units, in addition to the administrative and program items in their budgets, plan a school gift. To this end, most units plan fundraising events. We all at some time have participated in or heard of fun fairs or have purchased candy, fruitcakes, pizzas, etc., to help raise funds for PTA budgets. PTAs have been able to purchase computers, learning center equipment, art pieces, soccer goals, and many other items for the schools. In addition, many, many volunteer hours are given to schools by PTA moms, dads, and grandparents.

District 129 also has a PTA Council. The Council has four major responsibilities: (1) strengthening the units, (2) developing leadership, (3) promoting membership, and (4) giving service to the local school community. The PTA Council has set a membership theme, "Reaching for the Stars," which includes a districtwide goal of a fifty percent increase in membership.

The PTA Council urges all community members to support PTA programs by making a $1.50 membership donation per person. Individuals can join through their neighborhood school or by sending their donation to PTA, c/o 80 South River Street, Aurora, Illinois, 60507, Attention: Randi.

9. DO YOU KNOW
How many West High students took one semester or more of vocational education during the 1983-84 school year?
a. 921 b. 1,247 c. 1,672

10. DO YOU KNOW
What is the average length of time the teaching staff has taught in the West Aurora Public Schools?
a. 15.4 b. 9.2 c. 11.7

Answers to Trivia Questions

1. b	6. a
2. b	7. b
3. a	8. c
4. a	9. c
5. c	10. a

8

SCHOOL ZONE

A report to the District 129 community

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INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

Progress Report

March 18, 1985

Following is a report of the progress of each of the committees established this year to carry on the Instructional Audit. Each progress report will be preceded by a brief statement of the committee's major tasks for the year and an indication of the committee membership.

A. COMMON CORE:

Major Tasks

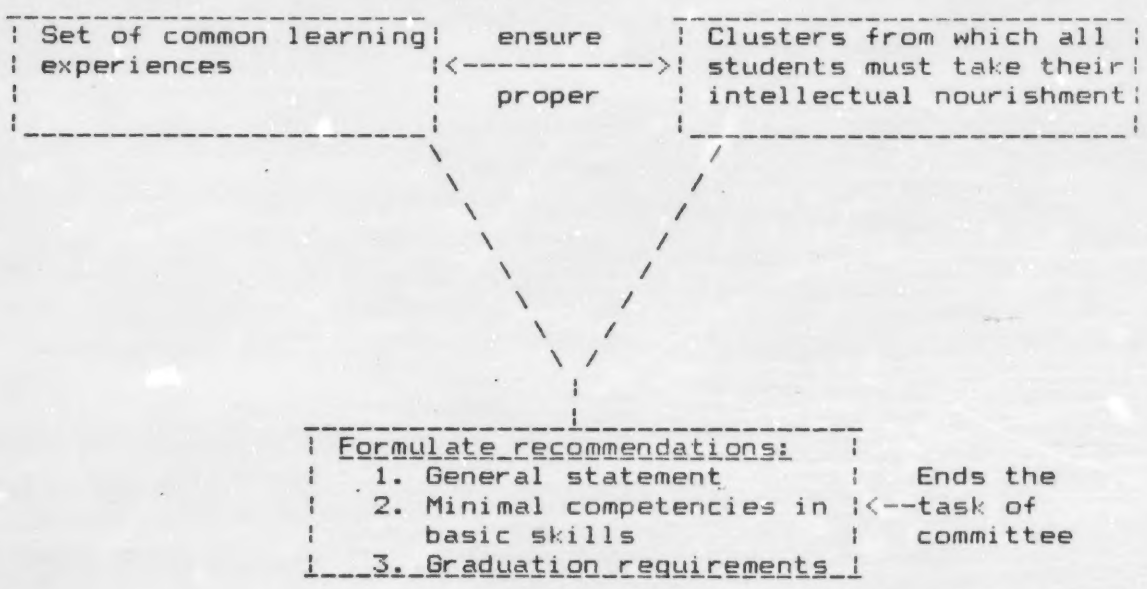
- Define a core of common learnings which describe the outcomes of 13 years of schooling,
- Recommend courses to be included,
- Develop an implementation plan including graduation requirements.

Membership

9 staff memebers K-12
3 community members

Progress Report

The committee has met about ten times. They are focusing on the learnings expected of all graduates rather than graduation requirements. One of the unresolved issues is mastery of learnings vs. experiences to promote the learnings. The work to date may be outlined as in the following diagram.


Set of common learning experiences
ensure proper
Clusters from which all students must take their intellectual nourishment
Formulate recommendations:
1. General statement
2. Minimal competencies in basic skills
3. Graduation requirements
Ends the task of committee

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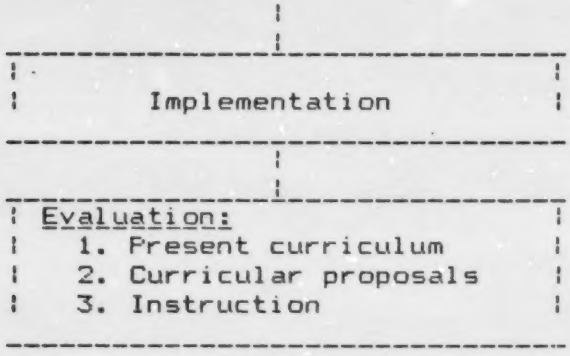

Common learnings could be found in a number of courses, rather than a single one. Students would be expected to take courses from each of the clusters developed.

In addition, a staff committee is working on levels of courses required for graduation.

B. STANDARDS FOR PASSING AND RETENTION

Major Tasks

- Develop a position statement which includes the issue of relative or absolute standards,
- Develop basic standards for each level to pass to the next grade or level: K, primary, intermediate, middle school, high school,
- Develop a procedure for consideration by others.

Membership

18 staff K-12, 8 parents

Progress Report

A working draft of a position statement has been developed and the committee should complete work on it soon. The draft included standards, reasons, monitoring and processes common to all levels (elementary, middle school and high school) plus the same four elements unique to each level. The standards are to be met to move from one level to the next, but not necessarily one grade level to the next. It will be necessary to expand the committee, especially when they move into grading standards (the second part of their task).

C. STUDENT, PARENT AND SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major Tasks

- Develop a statement of responsibilities for each group,
- Develop an implementation plan.

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Membership

10 staff members K-12, 5 parents

Progress Report

A draft statement has been developed which briefly outlines the responsibilities of each group in a clear and concise list format. The committee is in process of developing a listing of both school and community resources. The intent is to prepare the list in a problems format of "Who to contact if..." The committee is also working on a series of recommended highlights from the "Rights and Responsibilities Handbook" which could be used throughout the year in individual school newsletters. Although the committee has been charged with suggesting staff inservice to carry out the intent of the statements, the committee believes the Staff Development Committee should be responsible for this.

D. ARTICULATION

Major Tasks

- Develop a definition of articulation,
- Establish critical articulation points,
- Establish subject area priorities,
- Establish a time line for each subject area,
- Define procedures and responsibilities for carrying out articulation.

Membership

CAC II (14 staff members from all levels)

Progress Report

A working definition has been developed. Critical articulation points have been identified as K-1, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9. Reading, language and math have been identified as the top priority areas. All other subjects are priority two. The committee is evaluating the current status of articulation prior to recommending procedures and responsibilities.

E. HOMEWORK

Major Tasks

- Develop a philosophy statement,
- Develop guidelines for use with different ages and levels,
- Develop representative samples of appropriate homework for each level: primary, intermediate, middle school, high school,
- Recommend an implementation plan.

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Membership

Professional Council (5 AEAW members, 5 administrators)

Progress Report

The committee got a late start. It has met once and has identified the key questions and issues. The next meeting will begin work on the philosophy and purposes for homework. The committee will also be determining the appropriate point to involve parents.

F. PREPARATION FOR THE WORK FORCE

Major Tasks

- Develop a position statement,
- Develop a statement of general competencies and attitudes needed for entering the world of work,
- Recommend courses or course changes needed to carry out the position and meet the competencies and attitudes recommended,
- Plan for inter-district cooperation.

Membership

In process of determination, but will include both 129 and 131 staff and community representatives.

Progress Report

The composition and time table for this task has been changed as a result of the Illinois State Plan for Education for Employment adopted in December, 1984. Now it is not just Districts 129 and 131 which are involved but a region also including Geneva, Batavia, Kaneland, Waubonsee Community College and possibly Oswego and Yorkville. It is expected that a planning grant will be submitted to the state in July. The time table is:

Regionalize by	July 1, 1985
Write the plan by	July 1, 1986
Develop curriculum plan by	July 1, 1987
Fully implement by	July 1, 1988

G. ALTERNATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR

Major Tasks

- Identify the nature and extent of behavior problems,
- Identify current alternatives for dealing with misbehavior and their effectiveness
- Identify additional alternatives.

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Membership

The committee has not been formed but will include teachers, principals, special education staff, deans or counsellors, and parents.

Progress Report

None.

H. UNRESOLVED ISSUES

What processes are needed for further staff review of recommendations?

What types of opportunities should be made available to the public to respond/react to our recommendations prior to Board of Education action?

Donald W. Nylin
Asst. Supt. for Instruction

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West Aurora Public Schools

INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

Staff Position Statements

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WEST AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

STAFF POSITION STATEMENTS

"What should our district be doing?", is the question being asked this year as we continue in year 2 of a 3 year review of our curriculum and instruction.

After studying a number of national reports, 8 major issues were identified. These issues are ones which have a significant impact upon the education of children in District 129 and which can be affected by local decisions and action.

The issues are:

- essentials of learning
- a common curriculum
- choices for students
- extra-curricular activities
- dealing with individual differences
- expectations for grades, passing and behavior
- student-parent responsibilities
- instructional time

Each staff member in the district was invited to participate in a series of meetings which ultimately resulted in a position statement for each of the issues.

The position statements are posed as possibilities. Public discussion to see the implications of these or other positions is encouraged. Public reaction to these or other positions will assist the Board of Education as it considers directions for the future.

The format for each issue is -

a. A brief statement of position from the national reports

b. A brief statement describing the current status in District 129

c. The Staff Position Statement

A series of meetings has been planned to review these recommendations with the public.

We encourage you to -

READ & REFLECT - prior to the meetings

RESPOND & REACT - at the meetings

Thank you for your interest.

Instructional Audit Steering Committee

Deann Alleman, President, Board of Education

Miles Beach, Learning Center Teacher, Greenman School and President, Aurora Education Association, West

Mary Bernard, Science Teacher, West High

Robert Haggenjos, Director, Career & Vocational Education

Robert Lathrop, Principal, Jefferson Middle School

Tom Madden, Principal West High

Donald Nylin, Assistant Supt. for Instruction (Chairman)

Steve Sibon, Principal, Freeman School

Steve Wilson, Senior High Teacher, Hope Wall School

March, 1984

Issue 1. Essentials of Learning

Recent national studies have recommended that greater emphasis be placed upon critical thinking, problem solving, learning how to learn, and relating learning from one subject to another and to life.

District 129

Many staff members accept these recommendations as important parts of education. While no comprehensive plan exists to accomplish these goals, they are addressed throughout the curriculum in varying degrees.

Staff Position Statement:

A general education is needed for personal development, physical well being, effective functioning as a citizen, and vocational preparation. Such an education should include the arts (literature, music, and art) as an integral part of the program- kindergarten through grade eight and optional thereafter. An emphasis should be placed on helping students understand why they are learning and how to use that learning in life both now and later. A positive self-concept and an awareness of individual talents are essential to the total development of the student and, thus, should receive emphasis.

Major emphasis should be given to developing skills in reading, communication (oral and written), and mathematics; developing the ability and willingness to do quality work; and developing effective interpersonal skills. These skills and attitudes are fundamental learning in all subjects.

Basic information and skills are essential at the beginning level of any discipline (subject). Common threads should be continued from kindergarten through grade twelve. An emphasis beginning with basic knowledge and skills and progressing through critical thinking and problem solving should exist at each level of schooling.

Education for employment requires both a sound general education and, for many students, specific preparation to enter the work force.

Issue 2. Common Curriculum

Recent national studies of education have recommended that students have a common core curriculum including English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Some recommendations for high school include specific numbers of years of study for each subject. Some of the studies suggest that foreign language and/or knowledge and use of computers be a part of the common core.

District 129 -

From grades 1-8 students have a required program of reading, English, spelling, science, math, social studies, health, and physical education. A new computer curriculum for grades 1-8 is being started. Art and music are required grades 1-6. At the high school level, many specific courses are required, varying from department to department.

Requirements for graduation (effective with freshman class of 1984)

1 credit = one full year of study one period every day

	State of Illinois	District 129
English	3 credits	3 credits, including one semester each of Fundamentals of English, Written Composition, Oral Composition, American Literature.
Math	2 credits, a portion may be computer science	2 credits, including one credit as a freshman. (One credit may be in a math related area.)
Science	1 credit	1 credit-elective (may be applied science)
Social Studies	2 credits, including American history (1 yr.), Consumer Economics (1/2 yr)	2 credits - American history(1 credit), American government (1/2 credit) and Consumer Economics (1/2 credit)
Physical Ed.	4 credits	4 credits Health (1/2 credit) and driver education (1/2 credit) may count for physical education.
Health	1/2 credit	1/2 credit (may be in lieu of 1/2 credit of physical education)

	State of Illinois	District 129
Music, (vocal or instrumental) art, foreign language, or vocational ed.	1 credit	1 credit
Electives	2 1/2 credits	9 credits
Total credit for graduation	16 credits	22credits

NOTE: State guidelines to clarify what may be included in math,science, and social science have not been developed.

Staff Position Statement:

All elementary and middle school subjects (courses) should be required of all students. When appropriate, subjects should be adjusted to the different capability levels of students. At the middle school, some courses which are a part of the exploratory program (currently art, band, home economics, industrial arts, and performing arts) may be elective. Participation in the exploratory program, however, is not elective.

At the high school level, the current requirements listed above should be continued, for the present. The requirements should be reviewed periodically. The majority of the specifically required courses should be taken during the freshman and sophomore years with more options available during the junior and senior years.

Especially during the middle and high school years, alternative courses or programs should be developed and made available for students of various abilities and interests. Admission to such courses or programs should be based upon assessment of the student's aptitude and performance related to the course or program and recommendations of teachers familiar with the student.

To insure continuity of programs from kindergarten through grade 12, a plan to insure and maintain articulation should be developed and implemented.

Recognizing that some children's early years do not equip them to take advantage of the kindergarten year, programs for preschool children in need of assistance should be available.

Issue 3. Choices

Recent national studies of education have recommended that students at the high school level have more required and fewer elective courses. Some also recommend that electives be part of a plan. They do not indicate whether the courses should serve vocational preparation, students' personal interests, or a combination.

District 129
Currently high school students may fill electives from many courses of an academic, vocational, or avocational (personal interest) nature. So that each course relates to a student's educational goals, freshmen are helped to select courses for the next three years. This course plan will be reviewed regularly and may be changed.

Staff Position Statement:

At all levels, students should have opportunities to explore new areas or to study in depth. This may occur within a subject or, especially at the high school level, through a variety of courses available.

At the elementary level (grades kindergarten through six), no elective subjects are deemed necessary.

At the middle school level (grades seven and eight), the only electives should be within the exploratory program. Some may be required, but others may be available from structured (controlled) choices.

At the elementary and middle school levels, students should become aware of a variety of careers and the requirements to pursue them. Courses at the elementary and middle school levels should not have as a focus preparation for specific careers or jobs.

Band should continue to be available to students grades 5-8 but not to the exclusion of other subjects. Band should continue to be an elective at the high school.

At the high school level, course planning for the remainder of the high school years should occur during the freshman year. The plan should be reviewed at least annually. Most electives should be part of a planned sequence of courses.

At the high school level, all students should have some exposure to vocational preparation. Such preparation should not only focus on fundamental knowledge, processes, and skills needed for general categories of careers but also allow for a high degree of specialization within a particular career or occupational area. To accomplish this preparation, facilities and programs should be available (locally or regionally) to prepare students to compete realistically in the job market after high school. In addition, greater opportunities are needed to provide students and parents with guidance in both course selection and planning for the immediate years beyond high school.

Issue 4. Extra-curricular activities

Extra-curricular activities are mentioned in few of the national studies of education. Those which mention them support the concept but not necessarily the specific activities.

District 129

We define extra-curricular activities as those non-credit activities which are approved and sponsored by school officals and engaged in voluntarily by students to enrich their school experience.

Elementary schools have a very limited extra-curricular program. It is primarily a sports program. Middle schools have a large number of pupils involved in sports, fewer in music, and a few in other areas. The high school has a comprehensive athletic program and also offers music and drama programs and a variety of clubs. Participation is voluntary.

Eligibility requirements at the high school are currently being revised.

Staff Position Statement:

Extra-curricular activities should support the educational goals of the district. Each activity has unique objectives which should be clearly stated and periodically reviewed in light of the district's goals.

Available extra-curricular activities should include not only athletic but also cultural, academic, and vocational areas. All students should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Participation in any extra-curricular activity should be limited to students meeting district eligibility requirments and, where applicable, those of the Illinois High School Association. High standards of conduct and sportsmanship should be expected of all students. Students who do not conduct themselves accordingly in class, school, and school activities should be subject to denial of participation in extra-curricular activities.

Issue 5. Individual Differences

Recent national studies of education have mixed recommendations about individual differences. Some suggest pupils be grouped based on ability or achievement, some oppose grouping, some suggest slow or gifted students be helped or challenged beyond the normal school day or year.

District 129

Grouping is defined as bringing together for instruction pupils with a similar level of achievement and/or ability.

Grouping by achievement for reading and math is common at the elementary grades. It is more extensive at the middle school, adding English, science, and social studies. Pupils are generally assigned to their groups by the school staff. At the high school, English, math, and science courses are available, extending from slow track to honors. Students are assigned to a slow track class but are not assigned to honors classes.

From grades K-12, a comprehensive program of help varying from one period a day to fulltime placement in a special class is available for children with more severe learning difficulties.

Staff Position Statement:

Grouping within a classroom or within a course is appropriate at all levels, as needed for the skills being developed. In some cases, to have classes operating at different levels of difficulty is appropriate with students assigned to that level at which they may be most successful and still be challenged. Whenever grouping is done, it should be done by an individual subject only. Such grouping should be based upon clearly defined criteria related to that subject. The criteria should be common at least to the school but, when appropriate, on a district basis. Any grouping procedures used should not be detrimental to either the school program or the students in that grade or course. Whenever students are grouped, they should also have opportunities to associate with non-grouped students.

Students who are grouped should have their status and placement reviewed annually or at any other time at the request of the teacher, parents, or student. Some reasonable method of communication should be used to inform students and parents of major grouping placement.

At the high school level, some specific courses are required for graduation. Within those courses, serious consideration should be given to developing levels designed to meet the needs of students with markedly different capabilities.

Resources for special education services or instruction services should be allocated based upon pupil needs.

In the interest of effective instruction, ongoing staff in-service should be provided for all staff to help sensitise them to working with all types of students. In the interest of equity, teachers should have the opportunity and be encouraged to rotate periodically to teach students of different capabilities, behavior, and motivation. Such rotation should be limited to those subjects for which the teacher has appropriate qualifications.

Issue 6. Expectations

Recent studies of education recommend higher expectations for grades, minimum requirements to pass a course, more homework at the high school level, and more stringent codes of conduct.

District 129

Specific district standards for grades do not exist. There is general agreement within a school as to minimum requirements to pass a course. Such requirements vary somewhat from school to school. Codes of conduct (including consequences for misbehavior) have been developed, disseminated, and used in the past 3-4 years. Some courses/teachers have heavy homework demands; some have few or no demands.

Staff Position Statement:

To improve the quality of students' education, the academic and behavior standards need to be higher in several areas.

Grades and Homework

District guidelines to receive grades should be made more specific and communicated to students and parents. Separate grades for effort should continue to be assigned 1-8; and, for 9-12, students or parents may have available upon request a statement of a student's effort. Appropriate criteria for grades should be developed for those subjects or classes in which students based upon capability are grouped.

A district homework policy which recommends the nature of meaningful homework for various levels and subjects should be developed and implemented.

Retention in a grade/Failure of a course

Standards for passing each grade or subject should be developed.

Grading and retention policies should be designed and used to help prepare students for the expectations of the next level of schooling (primary, intermediate, middle school, high school).

Reasons for failure to meet developed criteria for passing a grade or course must be considered. A range of alternatives to respond to the failure are needed. One of those alternatives may be retention in a grade or repeating a course. At the elementary level, academic progress, age, and social and emotional maturity should be evaluated when retention is being considered.

Student Behavior and Consequences of Misbehavior

Published standards for pupil behavior are reasonable. Enforcement of those standards requires the cooperation of the principal, teachers, students, and parents. In support of the district standards, each school should develop its own written discipline plan. Plans may vary somewhat from school to school. In addition to concerns about misbehavior, passive resistance and inattention in class, and similar behaviors that are not in the student's best interest, even when the behavior doesn't bother others, should be addressed.

Surety of consequences for misbehavior is more important than the severity of the consequences. Consequences and their enforcement should be consistent district-wide, but appropriate to the age of the child. Reports of behavior (positive and negative) should be communicated to the students and parents.

A range of alternative consequences need to be found for chronically misbehaving students. Such should include, but not be limited to, assignment to special classes outside the school day or exclusion from school.

Issue 7. Student-Parent Responsibility

Some of the national studies of education state that schools have been expected to assume more responsibilties than they should. Some also recommend that parents take a more active part in their children's education, set higher expectations for their children, and set an example by being continuing learners. Students are urged to set higher standards for themselves and to take more challenging courses.

District 129

Our schools, in addition to educating children, also transport, feed, check their health, provide guidance and social work service, teach them to drive, have recreational programs, and have social activities. Parent involvement with the child's education is heaviest at the elementary school level and appears to decline both in degree and number while the child progresses through school.

Staff Position Statement:

The responsibilities of parents, students, and the school for a student's performance, attendance, and behavior should be developed in cooperation with parents and communicated to parents and students.

The parents' responsibility for their child's education should include an active role in preparing the child for learning, monitoring the child's progress, encouraging and motivating achievement and good behavior, and emphasizing the importance of school. Both the schools and parents should foster the attitude, and students should accept that schooling is a high priority. Regular attendance is one important indicator of this priority. Student behavior which disturbs others or distracts them from learning should not be tolerated.

Parent-teacher conferences are an effective means of communication and mutual support of a student. Conferences should be encouaged at all levels. Time should be made available for these conferences.

Voicing special concern about programs for home-bound pregnant students, the staff believes that this program should be devloped to include more responsibilities for the student.

Issue 8. Instructional Time

Two recent national studies have recommended that the length of the school day be extended (up to 7 hours), that the school year be lengthened (to 200-220 days), and that time be provided beyond the school day or year to meet needs of slow learners and gifted.

District 129

Elementary students (grades 1-6) attend class 5 1/4 hours per day; kindergarten, 2 1/4 hours; middle school students attend class 5 6/10 hours; most high school students attend class or study hall 5 9/10 hours. Passing time and lunch is not included in these time. High school juniors may petition for only 5 hours of attendance, and seniors may elect only 5 hours of attendance.

The school year includes 176 days of instruction at all levels.

Summer school is currently available only at the high school level. Enrollment is optional. Tuition must cover the cost of summer school programs.

Staff Position Statement:

Class time should have a more academic focus with fewer interruptions of an non-academic nature. Examples of non-academic interruptions are persons wishing to speak to a teacher or student during class time, announcements on the intercom, students out of class for athletic events or performances, collections of money. Activities such as assemblies and field trips of an educational or cultural nature are not considered non-academic interruptions. Efforts should be made to use class time more efficiently, and more appropriate home study should be assigned.

Freshman, sophomores, and juniors should be required and seniors encouraged to attend the full day (7 hours).

Serious consideration should be given to extending student instructional time. This could include, but need not be limited to, extending the length of the school day or extending the length of the school year.

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